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Rolf Muller

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EXAMINER

EGWIM, KELECHI CHIDI

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1796

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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.



### **DETAILED ACTION**

1. Due to amendments by applicant, the previous 112 rejections of record have been overcome and are hereby withdrawn.

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103***

2. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

3. Claims 12-17, 20-24 and 28-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kohno et al. (USPN 4,835,198), for reason cited in the previous action. See example 10, experiments 24-26.

4. Claims 12-17 and 20-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Konno et al. (JP 61261341) or Kano et al. (JP 64002647)

Each of Konno et al. (See abstract) or Kano et al. (See abstract) individually teach gel compositions comprising two different vinyl alcohol polymers and water (a swelling agent). Kano teaches one of the vinyl alcohol polymers to have degrees of polymerization from 300 to 2000.

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While with abstracts of Konno et al. or Kano et al. do not expressly recite the specific degrees of polymerization for each of the PVA polymers as claimed, it is reasonable that the PVA polymers in Konno et al. or Kano et al. would include the combination of PVA polymers and properties as claims as Konno et al. or Kano et al. teach PVA gel compositions which are essentially the same as the claimed composition and the USPTO does not have at its disposal the tools or facilities deemed necessary to make physical determinations of the sort. In any event, an otherwise old composition is not patentable regardless of any new or unexpected properties. In re Fitzgerald et al , 619 F.2d 67, 205 USPQ 594 (CCPA 1980). See MPEP § 2112 - § 2112.02.

Even if assuming that the prior art references do not meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 102, it would still have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to arrive at the same inventive composition because the disclosure of the inventive subject matter appears within the generic disclosure of the prior art.

### ***Response to Arguments***

5. Applicant's arguments filed 04/22/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

6. Regarding the arguments against the "102(b)" rejections, it is noted that the rejections are not simple "102(b)" rejections, but rather "102(b)/103(a) rejections". See MPEP § 2112 - § 2112.02.

7. Regarding the argument that the "MW's" are not found "anywhere" in the reference, applicant is reminded that "MW's" and degrees of polymerization are used interchangeable in the polymer sciences, as they are merely unit variations where the MW of the monomer is known. Also, applicant is reminded that the claimed degrees of polymerization were rejected under 112 as not being supporting by the disclosure.

Finally, Applicant is directed to experiment 24-26 in the Kohno et al. where PVA - 117 is combined with various PVA's with lower degree of polymerization, and water.

In view of applicant's amendments, the rejection of claims 12-17, 20-24 and 28-39 over Kohno et al. are still maintained.

8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dr. Kelechi C. Egwim whose telephone number is (571) 272-1099. The examiner can normally be reached on M-T (7:30-6:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wu can be reached on (571) 272-1114. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Dr. Kelechi C. Egwim/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1796

KCE